

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 02345 301942Z
ACTION SCSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4688

UNCLAS LA PAZ 2345

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, BL
SUBJ: AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA

REF: (A) LA PAZ 2268, (B) AMBASSADOR STEDMAN/PACE TELECON
OF MARCH 30.

1. DCM CALLED MARCH 30 ON SUB-SECRETARY OF JUSTICE LUIS BALLIVIAN WHO WAS SWORN IN TO OFFICE MARCH 29. BALLIVIAN WAS GENERALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE PRISONER PROBLEM BUT NOT AWARE OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF CASES AND THE U.S. INTEREST IN MOVING FORWARD AS FAST AS POSSIBLE WITH ALL CASES BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE IN WHICH PRISONERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED FOR LONG PERIODS OR IN WHICH EVIDENCE IS WEAK OR OFFENSE APPEARS TO BE MINOR. DCM DESCRIBED PRESENT SITUATION AT LENGTH INCLUDING MEASURES WHICH EMBASSY IS TAKING TO MOVE HEARINGS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

2. BALLIVIAN SAID IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION THE DELAYS IN CARRYING OUT THE TRIALS WERE DEPLORABLE. HE SAID THE GOB MUST AND WAS TAKING STEPS TO SEE THAT JUSTICE WAS, IN GENERAL, ACCELERATED AND HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE NARCOTICS CASES, U.S. AND OTHER, MUST BE SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION. DCM INQUIRED WHETHER HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL JUDGES AND IF THERE WERE ANY DEVELOPMENTS ON THSI TOPIC. BALLIVIAN SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT
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SOUND FRIVOLOUS, SPACE WAS A REAL AND A MAJOR PROBLEM IN LA PAZ. HOWEVER, HE WAS VISITING MARCH 30 OR 31 WITH THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING WHICH OCCUPIES A BUILDING OPPOSITE THE CENTRAL COURT BUILDING AND IN WHICH HE THOUGH SPACE COULD BE OBTAINED VERY SOON. ASIDE FROM THIS POSSIBLE SOLUTION, THE MINISTRY'S SEARCH FOR TEMPORARY SPACE WOULD

CONTINUE.

3. DCM ALSO POINTED OUT CURRENT PROBLEM IN WOMEN'S PRISON WHERE INMATES UNTIL RECENTLY HAD PRIVILEGE OF PREPARING SNACKS IN THE KITCHEN OR IN THEIR ROOMS. THIS PRIVILEGE HAD BEEN CUT OFF APPARENTLY BECAUSE TOO MUCH ELECTRICITY WAS BEING USED. THE CONSUL HAD RECEIVED COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS ON MARCH 28 AND IT WAS ALSO MENTIONED IN REFERENCE B. BALLIVIAN SAID HE FOUND THIS HARD TO BELIEVE ESPECIALLY SINCE, AS DCM MENTIONED, THE INMATES OF THE MEN'S PRISON DID HAVE THIS PRIVILEGE. BALLIVIAN WOULD LOOK INTO THIS IMMEDIATELY.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE OVERALL PROBLEM, BALLIVIAN SAID HE WAS FULLY IN SYMPATHY WITH THE U.S. BAND EMBASSY CONCERN OVER THE DELAY IN TRIALS AND THAT WE COULD COUNT ON HIS COOPERATION. HE FULLY APPROVED OF THE STEPS THE EMBASSY WAS TAKING AND URGED THAT DCM CONTACT HIM AS SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AROSE. DURING CONVERSATION DCM REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVING FORWARD QUICKLY AND GETTING AT LEAST SOME CASES RESOLVED IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.
STEDMAN

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